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Chair: Mr. Islam (Vice-Chair) ..... (Bangladesh)

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In the absence of Mr. Talbot (Guyana), Mr. Islam (Bangladesh), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 23: Groups of countries in special situations

(a) Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/67/88-E/2012/75, A/67/88/Corr.1-E/2012/75/Corr.1, A/67/92 and A/67/262)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (A/67/210 and A/67/386)

1. **Mr. Llorentty Soltz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that Bolivia wished to reiterate the position it had stated at the Fourth meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, held in Almaty on 12 September. The right of landlocked countries and territories to unrestricted and unconditional transit should be recognized under international law as a matter of justice and the need to facilitate transit should be seen as a contribution to general progress based on the principle of equality.

2. He reiterated his country's position on signing the Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea namely, that it was not a landlocked State but rather a country that had been temporarily deprived of its access to the sea and to its own coast. Chile had invaded Bolivia out of oligarchic interests acting with transnational companies in order to appropriate Bolivian natural resources. That invasion had led to the imposition of an unjust treaty whose terms had not been complied with, leaving an open wound in the heart of South America.

3. Bolivia reaffirmed its right to sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean and emphasized its commitment to the mechanisms for the pacific settlement of disputes set forth in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

4. **Mr. Al Mubarak** (Saudi Arabia) said that despite the laudable efforts of the international community to assist the least developed countries, those countries had doubled in number since they were first listed in 1971. An important factor, among others such as population growth, was the decline in the fulfilment of the advanced countries' commitment to provide development assistance as a result of the recent global financial crisis. In addition, recent years had witnessed growing protectionist tendencies on the part of certain States, which had greatly curtailed least developed countries' exports to world markets.

5. The challenges facing least developed countries required in-depth study, an objective analysis of their causes and earnest, redoubled efforts by international partners. The international community had an interest in helping those countries take advantage of globalization and economic openness, for otherwise their problems would become the problems of all.

6. Neglect of the commitment to provide the necessary assistance, continued disregard for human potential and the depletion of natural resources in the least developed countries had led to instability, wars and conflicts, with consequent aggravation of economic and social underdevelopment and an inability to catch up. The international community must therefore commit to fully honouring the pledges made to those countries by assisting them directly and indirectly and rescheduling or writing off their debts. It must dissipate their misgivings with regard to the fairness of the global trading system by adopting fair rules of international trade that opened up markets to their exports and by refraining from unfair restrictions on the movement of goods.

7. The Governments of the least developed countries must work assiduously to build organizational frameworks and market economy mechanisms, while States and international financial institutions must continue efforts to assist those countries in adopting suitable economic policies and carrying out appropriate structural reforms to support development.

8. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had greatly concerned itself with the development of those countries. Over three decades it had granted nearly US$ 100 million in non-reimbursable assistance and soft loans to 95 countries throughout the world in the fundamental development sectors of health, education and infrastructure. It had announced a contribution of $1 billion to the Fund for Poverty Alleviation in the

Islamic World; responded to the appeal of the international community for financing for education projects in developing countries to ensure compulsory primary education for all children by 2015; and offered $1 billion to combat illiteracy in the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Through the Saudi Development Fund, it had contributed $500 million in development loans on soft terms for education projects in developing and least developed countries, and for the Education for All fast track initiative. It had also offered free scholarships to nationals of developing and least developed countries to help them acquire the knowledge needed to participate in the development process at home.

9. In 2008, the Kingdom had donated $500 million to support the efforts of the World Food Programme to help needy countries cope with the global food crisis. It had also launched the Energy for the Poor initiative, designed to help the peoples of least developed countries meet rising energy costs, and announced the allocation of $500 million for soft loans, to be granted through the Saudi Development Fund to finance energy-related projects.

10. The Kingdom had previously written off upwards of $6 billion owed by least developed countries and had forgiven a significant number of outstanding debts under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative of the International Monetary Fund. It had in fact undertaken to grant debt relief to a number of those States even before the launch of the initiative.

11. Saudi Arabia, as a member of the Group of Twenty, had consistently rejected the adoption of protectionist policies and the obstruction of the smooth flow of international trade as solutions to the international financial crisis and stressed the need to deal with its growing ill effects on the least developed countries. It had urged the advanced countries and international financial institutions, too, to assist the least developed countries in coping with poverty, illiteracy and disease.

12. **Ms. Wang** Hongbo (China) said that, given the extreme vulnerability in the current global economic climate of the least developed and landlocked developing countries, their development efforts needed strong and effective support. Accordingly, the international community, in particular the major donor countries, should step up implementation of the initiatives under the Istanbul and Almaty programmes of action and fully respect their commitments to the least developed and landlocked developing countries. In particular, they should prioritize official development assistance as the most direct and effective form of support and target areas critical to the sustainable development of those countries, such as production capacity, agriculture, trade, infrastructure and transport. Support for landlocked developing countries should be more targeted, focusing on infrastructure development and the facilitation of trade, through enhanced regional cooperation and the coordination of transboundary transport policy.

13. The United Nations development system and institutions should give priority to support for the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, in particular, in the framework of South-South cooperation. In that context, as the lead coordinating agency of the United Nations system for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, the Office of the High Representative should be further strengthened in terms of both its functions and its resources to ensure that it had the necessary capacity to monitor, promote and implement support for countries in special situations.

14. In conclusion, she reaffirmed that China would continue its staunch support, in the framework of South-South cooperation, for the least developed and landlocked developing countries and would ensure that its foreign assistance priorities were geared more closely towards that group of countries.

15. **Mr. Lee** Tong-Q (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation supported efforts to strenghthen the mandate and responsibility of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and looked forward to seeing the Office's proposal for a new donor strategy. In order to achieve the ambitious goal of half of the least developed countries reaching the criteria for graduation, the graduation process should be improved and the incentives for graduation strengthened. It was also important to take prompt action to graduate eligible countries while also taking into account the particular vulnerabilities and difficulties of small island least developed countries.

16. The Republic of Korea concurred with the Almaty Ministerial Declaration on the paramount

importance of improving trade-related capacity and promoting investment in the landlocked least developed countries. It recognized that sustainable management and use of the oceans was a critical issue for the small island developing States, as highlighted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and looked forward to the third global conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States, to be held in Samoa in 2014.

17. The Republic of Korea was continuing its assistance to the development efforts of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. It had contributed 35 per cent of its official development assistance (ODA) to the least developed countries in the previous year, and provided duty-free, quota-free market access for their products on 95 per cent of all tariff lines.

18. **Mr. Almezaal** (Kuwait) said that since becoming independent in 1961, Kuwait had been committed to assisting the developing and least developed countries. Through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, over 100 countries had benefited from soft loans totalling $15 billion. In addition, his country contributed more than 1.3 per cent of its gross domestic product to ODA, well above the agreed percentage. The State of Kuwait also allocated ten per cent of its voluntary contributions to the programmes and funds of the United Nations.

19. As a country of the South whose economy depended fundamentally on oil, Kuwait wished to stress the importance of respecting the right of every country to develop its own resources and economy according to its own circumstances in order to support the three pillars of sustainable development, namely the economic, social and environmental spheres.

20. **Mr. Altinors** (Turkey) said that in order to meet the goal of graduating half of the least developed countries by 2020, full and timely implementation of the Programme of Action of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries was critical. The gap in the delivery of ODA commitments, the decline in the global economic and financial situation and the lack of basic technology and skills were decelerating development and capacity-building in the least developed countries.

21. Business-as-usual approaches would not suffice in such a context. There needed to be a synthesis of the Istanbul Programme of Action and the outcome document of Rio+20. The Committee's deliberations would provide an opportunity to achieve that integration. The needs of the least developed countries should be a priority in a comprehensive and human-centred post-2015 agenda that focused on poverty eradication, food security, education and health, social inclusion, youth employment, women's empowerment, access to energy, water and sanitation, and disaster risk reduction.

22. **Mr. Souissi** (Morocco) said that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was a historical turning point for building the post-MDG sustainable development agenda. Looking ahead to 2020, it was clear that among least developed countries, those without access to the sea were at an even greater disadvantage than the others. With a decline of 12 per cent in foreign direct investment (FDI) economic growth in the landlocked countries had fallen from 5.8 per cent in 2008 to 3.6 per cent in 2009, while the number of persons living in extreme poverty had soared, threatening to compromise the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in those countries. According to the World 2011 Investment Report, the landlocked least developed countries received only 4 per cent of total foreign direct investment. Their total share of global exports was below 1 per cent, and had fallen by 42 per cent between 2008 and 2009.

23. The landlocked developing countries faced serious obstacles that went well beyond the challenges posed by geography and had repercussions on the economic and social well-being of their population. He called for international support for capacity-building and the introduction of an international legal framework relating to trade in order to address their specific needs.

24. Building on established consensus, the upcoming comprehensive ten-year review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014 should provide an opportunity to take further steps towards operationalizing an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries and to adopt a new development cooperation framework with developed partners for the coming decade. It would be important to stress not only the goals of the countries concerned but also the principle of mutual responsibility as well as to establish a mechanism for monitoring and follow-

up of programmes of action for the least developed and landlocked developing countries.

25. Morocco welcomed the recommendation of the ad hoc working group to further study and strenghthen the smooth transition process for the countries graduating from the least developed country category, in particular with regard to sharing information, increased financial and technical support, and the active participation of development partners and the United Nations system in consultations on transition strategies.

26. **Ms. Htaik** (Myanmar) said that it was important to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action in order to reach the goal of halving the number of least developed countries by 2020. Myanmar, where 70 per cent of the population earned its livelihood from agriculture, understood that its own political will and national efforts would determine its development. It believed that quality growth depended on narrowing the gap between rich and poor. Myanmar was making a concerted effort to develop other sectors of its economy. Having been deprived of substantial development assistance for over two decades and now embarked on political and economic reforms under a democratically elected civilian Government, it hoped that both bilateral donors and the United Nations system would significantly raise their development contribution. Her country fully expected to graduate from its least developed status by 2020.

27. **Mr. Diallo** (Guinea) said that despite significant progress in a number of least developed countries over the past decade, particularly in the areas of democratic governance, primary education and women's empowerment, such gains would be illusory without eliminating poverty and hunger. Despite a modest improvement, the vast majority of people in those countries still lived below the poverty threshold, on less than $2 a day.

28. Least developed countries were paying a heavy price for the global economic crisis, which, coupled with their limited access to new information and communication technologies, their indebtedness and an 8.3 per cent decline in development assistance in 2011, had exacerbated the effects of the food and energy crises. Climate change, too, had increased their vulnerability to external shocks. In that context, the developed countries needed to honour their commitment to allocate between 0.15 and 0.20 per cent of their gross national product to assisting the least developed countries.

29. Despite the efforts of successive Governments to stem the tide, Guinea had experienced a rise in poverty from 49.5 per cent in 2002 to 55.5 per cent in 2010, and a jump in maternal mortality from 528 to 980 per 100,000 births over the same period. The economy's growth rate of 1.9 per cent in 2010 was insufficient to reverse the rise in poverty, and the 20.4 per cent inflation rate had seriously eroded purchasing power, while the debt continued to weigh on the country's scant public resources.

30. As the country embarked on a new democratic era in 2011, however, the Government had launched a vast programme of socioeconomic reforms that incorporated the Istanbul Programme of Action in its objectives. In September, Guinea had reached the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative after 18 months. Debt relief would enable it to invest newly released financial resources in basic social services aimed at poverty reduction and to normalize relations with its creditors.

31. Guinea hoped to move swiftly from the ranks of least developed countries and to become an emerging economy. It would capitalize on its immense natural resources in order to diversify its economy.

32. **Mr. Tazhiyev** (Kazahkstan) said that Kazakhstan intended to accede to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports and was preparing to accede to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, based in Mongolia. In line with his country's commitment to developing national energy systems, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources as keys to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, President Nazarbaev had declared in September that Kazakhstan would transition towards sustainable green growth under a new strategy to be adopted in 2013.

33. More than 80 per cent of the world's 1.5 billion people without access to electricity lived in least developed or landlocked developing countries. Kazakhstan was therefore exploring the possibility of establishing a fund to co-finance projects in renewable energy sources in those countries as well as in small island developing States. With the help of partners such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Europe, the

United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and other United Nations agencies, along with other countries in the vanguard of the green economy, Kazakhstan hoped to become a model for Central Asia, particularly in the areas of technology transfer and job creation.

34. Kazakhstan hoped to be chosen to host EXPO-2017 in Astana, centered on the theme of future energy. Holding the exhibition in Kazakhstan, which was more distant from the world's seas than any other country, would be an appropriate way for the international community to respond to the need for closer, complementary and mutually beneficial South-South and North-South cooperation.

35. **Mr. Gaspard** (Haiti) said that from Monterrey to Istanbul, Johannesburg and Doha, the international community had sounded the alarm with respect to the least developed countries. Like other least developed countries, Haiti had seen its economy grow and there were other signs of progress in the aftermath of the earthquake, including advances in education, health and governance.

36. In education, more than a million children across the country were attending school and receiving one hot meal a day, and through the *Abat grangou* project to combat hunger, which aimed to eradicate malnutrition by the year 2025, 2.2 million school-age children and 1 million children under five were expected to be fed. In health, a new programme of mandatory health coverage had been introduced and the infant mortality rate had declined.

37. In terms of gender equality, women now made up 30 per cent of the Haitian Government, as stipulated by the Constitution, and a programme of micro-credits for low-income women had been launched. The report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/678) and Security Council resolution 2070 (2012) both reflected a positive assessment of the country's progress. Along with other United Nations agencies, the road map of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries had been of particular help, as had South-South cooperation, although it was important to stress that South-South cooperation should remain complementary to North-South cooperation and should in no way replace it.

38. Despite the progress it had achieved thus far, Haiti faced great challenges if it was to reach the Millennium Development Goals or, at the very least, maintain its current gains. While all least developed countries were especially vulnerable to natural disasters, well before the 2010 earthquake, Haiti had been one of the countries at highest risk of experiencing hurricanes, cyclones, floods and earthquakes. Noting the clear and urgent need to define environmental governance for all the least developed countries, he expressed support for the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund should be activated without delay and guarantee a minimum contribution to the least developed countries that would ensure their ability to adapt to climate change.

39. Concerning overall financing for development, while supporting the need for countries to seek innovative funding sources, Haiti believed that it must be complementary to official development assistance and urged existing donors not to flag in their efforts to help least developed countries reach the Millennium Development Goals. It was important to stress that least developed countries faced great hurdles in securing international capital from private markets. While debt relief brought positive results in the short term, the longer-term effects deserved reflection. Haiti, along with a number of other least developed countries, had agreed to a series of macroeconomic measures designed to attract foreign investment, but not much had changed. He urged the international community to engage in a process of reflection that would yield a solution to those problems.

40. **Mr. Sareer** (Maldives) said that graduation policy needed to be revamped, providing for greater United Nations donor monitoring, particularly as Maldives' own transition strategy had proved hugely deficient. Drastic changes had had to be made in the country's development policy and economic framework, impinging on every sector of Maldivian society.

41. Maldives had engaged extensively with the World Trade Organization (WTO), including successfully campaigning to extend the application of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) for itself and subsequently all least developed countries by seven years.

42. Small and vulnerable economies should have access to the Enhanced Integrated Framework and utilize trade policy reviews to draw the attention of WTO member States to graduation challenges and to

negotiate an Everything but Arms agreement with the European Union. While Maldives intended to join the European Union's Generalized System of Preferences scheme to ensure market access, the eligibility requirements were substantial and required compliance with 27 international conventions.

43. Maldives had made great efforts to diversify trade options, but those efforts struggled to fill the gap left by the post-graduation loss of least-developed-country status and ODA. Moreover, it had held a donor conference in 2010 and received a range of pledges totalling $313 million, yet only a fraction had been fulfilled. Those factors, combined with the inability to reassess the country's situation, had led to massive shortfalls and risky economic policies, with some harming economic stability. Instead of creating a robust and attractive business environment, graduation had prompted greater economic uncertainty.

44. The smooth transition strategy needed continually to be reassessed to ensure effectiveness and relevance. Graduation should not threaten least developed countries; rather, it should be the next stage in their development. The Maldives' strategy, while initially adequate, had not been adaptive to the rapidly changing Maldivian economy and global economic slowdown. Maldives had had success in pioneering measures to mitigate the effects of graduation, yet those efforts had not been enough. A coherent national strategy involving the input of all stakeholders was paramount, but its execution should be supported and monitored, initially on an annual basis for the first three years after graduation and then triennially. A consultative mechanism that brought together multilateral agencies, donor States and the graduating country was needed and should remain active throughout the transition process and integrated with other consultative processes.

45. Furthermore, specific vulnerabilities of individual nations should be taken into account. Maldives enjoyed a relatively high per capita income and a robust, world-class tourism industry, which had become its economic backbone. However, that masked the fact that the country remained vulnerable to shocks, such as in the depletion of tuna stocks, its primary export, and was hampered by its dispersed nature, which left a number of islands without basic sanitation and made internal trade and infrastructure development prohibitively expensive.

46. In conclusion, he said that Maldives gave its full support and endorsement to the draft resolution to be submitted by the Group of 77 and China on the subject.

47. **Mr. Empole** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the adoption of the Istanbul Programme of Action was a milestone for least developed countries and the frank review process had helped draw lessons from the past. However, a great number of challenges lay between words and actions.

48. Sufficient resources were needed for structural reform through production capacity growth, including in the private sector, if least developed countries were to be able to overcome obstacles old and new on the path to graduation. In that regard, priority and urgent attention should be given to improving energy and potable water provision and the agriculture sector. Given the importance of energy in all sectors and challenges, universal access was a must.

49. The climatic situation should be taken into account in implementing programmes to improve the agricultural sector, given least developed countries' lack of economic diversification and their dependence on climate-sensitive products. Land degradation and desertification had devastating implications for poverty, hunger and political and social instability. As least developed countries were primarily responsible for their own development, it was of vital importance that they intensified their adaptation efforts, with support from the United Nations system through a variety of measures.

50. The promises made on the adoption of the Programme of Action, such as contributions and measures designed to stimulate investment in production and technology and knowledge transfer, should figure among partners' development and cooperation priorities. ODA allocations, which represented the principal revenue stream for such countries, should take into account countries' real needs on the ground and be results-oriented. Corporate investment in least developed countries' private sectors should be encouraged, particularly in the development of broadband and digital technology, market trading and sustainable tourism. Peace and security were likewise key to economic growth.

51. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had intensified its efforts to create an investment climate that would stimulate private sector growth, close investment gaps and attract FDI through, inter alia, tax

incentives and less red tape. It had also reported economic growth owing to greater discipline and tax compliance. Also, it had been reforming the security and justice sectors and had implemented oversight of public administration workers.

52. The country had renewed relations with the international financial community through an enhanced interim programme, which had been followed by other programmes, including a first and second poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) and a national programme covering five initiatives with a view to increasing internal and external resources and redressing public spending. His country was currently working on mainstreaming the Istanbul commitments into national programmes.

53. As a post-conflict country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo should figure in its partners' priority development programmes and benefit from sustained international support and more flexible forms of assistance and financing. In recent years, assistance had often been restricted and focused only on emergency humanitarian relief. Other sectors, however, were in vital need of support if the country was to be more resilient to shocks and its national production capacity enhanced.

54. **Ms. Al-Madadi** (Qatar) said that the international financial crisis had resulted in a sharp reduction in aid provided to least developed countries, curbed those countries' exports and impeded their development. Least developed countries were increasingly marginalized in the global economy and most were not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the agreed-upon deadline. Stakeholders must consider long-term social and economic trends in order to fully understand the development challenges they faced. Qatar shared the concerns of the international community in connection with the stalled Doha Round; concerted efforts must be made to ensure a successful outcome of the Round, with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. International cooperation, free trade and economic liberalization were among the most effective ways to accelerate equitable development.

55. The Istanbul Programme of Action sought to mobilize additional domestic and international financial resources to achieve sustainable development in least developed countries, address the structural challenges they faced at the national level, and remove restrictions that prevented them from integrating effectively into the global economy. Least developed countries and their development partners must honour the commitments they had made in that regard. Least developed countries required technological assistance from developed countries; additional financial resources must also be provided, especially in Africa. Developing countries bore primary responsibility, however, for formulating and following up on their development strategies. They should also participate in the formulation of international economic policy.

56. In addition to providing bilateral and emergency aid, Qatar allocated 0.7 per cent of its gross national product to official development assistance. Qatar had also acted as a mediator in talks to achieve peace in Darfur and, in order to support development and reconstruction in that region, had established the Darfur Development Bank with a capital of $2 billion.

57. **Mr. Gaumakwe** (Botswana) said that landlocked developing countries, which were particularly vulnerable to climate change, would welcome a special climate change facility to address their needs. Botswana was still recovering from staggering revenue losses caused by the 2008 financial and economic crisis and therefore supported the establishment of vulnerability indicators specifically tailored to landlocked developing countries, which would serve as an early warning mechanism to mitigate external shocks to food security and critical development components. Creating a financing system adapted to the unique challenges of landlocked developing countries would also be timely.

58. Citing the geographical and financial impediments to setting up business and attracting foreign investment in landlocked developed countries, he called on the international community to increase assistance to build the necessary transport, energy and water infrastructure, which would go a long way in offsetting import and export transaction costs and help bridge the gap to global markets.

59. Botswana was both a landlocked developing country and a transit country and required much infrastructure development and maintenance. To facilitate efficient trans-border movement of goods and services, it had entered into various cooperation agreements with neighbours, including with Namibia on a dry port facility and one-stop border posts and with Zambia on one one-stop border post and on the

construction of the Kazungula Bridge along the north-south corridor. It was also at the planning stage on two railway projects, one with Namibia and another with Mozambique and Zimbabwe. However, those projects would require assistance from the international community.

60. Building synergies at bilateral and subregional levels was critical to the success of the Almaty Programme of Action. Development partners should prioritize funding at that level, particularly as the sustainable economic development of landlocked developing countries required the accelerated implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

61. **Mr. Kpukumu** (Sierra Leone) said his country's goal was to achieve middle-income economy status within the next decade, which was in line with the objectives of the Istanbul Programme of Action. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States (New Deal) and Istanbul Programme of Action were mutually reinforcing and thus synergies between the two processes should be encouraged. The support of the international community was paramount if countries in special situations were to attain internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015, particularly in light of prevailing global uncertainties.

62. Sierra Leone's vehicle for change was its Agenda for Change and successor framework, the Agenda for Prosperity. The Agenda for Change, which focused on five priority areas, mirrored the Istanbul Programme of Action and was the product of a joint vision between the United Nations and Government of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone had made progress in its democratic transition, and infrastructure projects had been expanded in the country's four main regions. Despite external economic shocks, GDP had grown from 5.0 per cent to 5.3 per cent between 2010 and 2011.

63. Much of the country's progress had been underpinned by prudent macroeconomic management, anti-corruption measures and private-sector investment, as well as by an overhaul of the agricultural sector with a view to making it a driver for socioeconomic growth. Agriculture had been further boosted by a rehabilitation of roads linking agribusiness centres with production and market centres and had continued to attract significant investment.

64. Considerable progress had been made in health care. A free health-care scheme for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five had seen infant and maternal mortality rates improve significantly and targeted intervention in various areas of the health sector had led to increased immunization coverage and antenatal care. HIV/AIDS prevalence had declined from 9 per cent to 5 per cent between 2009 and 2011.

65. Investment in education had also increased, particularly in such areas as education of the girl child and science, vocational and technical education. The Government had paid tuition fees for women studying science at university and public examination fees for school pupils with a view to achieving universal basic education. A public sector reform programme had been introduced to enhance productivity and the services provided.

66. Despite those efforts, challenges remained; however, they were nothing that could not be surmounted with concerted efforts and commitment. While he commended the few donor countries to have met the ODA target of 0.7 per cent, others needed to step up their efforts. Support from other countries of the South was welcome, but South-South cooperation should be complementary, and not an alternative, to North-South cooperation.

67. Although the transformation of countries in special situations depended largely on the countries themselves, the debt burden of the least developed countries must be fully addressed under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Least developed countries themselves were committed to increasing their efforts, productivity and accountability to ensure effective use of aid. Sierra Leone welcomed the quest for innovative sources of financing, particularly aid for trade, and looked forward to their full and effective application. It also welcomed the initiatives taken by the European Union (trade liberalization and quota-free market access) and the United States (African Growth and Opportunity Act) to reduce inequalities, facilitate growth and create employment.

68. **Mr. Ngculu** (South Africa) said that, while African least developed countries had experienced growth of 7 per cent for several years, reducing poverty had proved a greater challenge. South Africa reiterated the need to boost poverty reduction efforts and noted that

the Istanbul Programme of Action confirmed the importance of collective initiatives to that end.

69. With limited resources, South Africa had used the African Renaissance Fund and managed to increase funding support for post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, an important milestone for South Africa and the continent. South Africa was committed to economic development through regional and international cooperation and called on the North to be more responsive to the development needs of developing countries, particularly of least developed countries.

70. South Africa acknowledged the key role of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union and the African Development Bank in rejuvenating infrastructure and emphasized the importance of the international community in addressing the lack of adequate physical infrastructure in least developed countries, which hamstrung development efforts.

71. South Africa supported efforts to speed up the implementation, in a more coordinated manner, of the specific actions agreed upon in the Almaty Programme of Action and Almaty Declaration, particularly in relation to construction, transport, communications and energy infrastructure, which would enhance the sustainable development of landlocked developing countries.

72. **Mr. Mugerwa** (Uganda) said his country was committed to the full implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and had already mainstreamed its priority actions into its national development plan. Development partners needed to support least developed countries by honouring commitments to mobilize requisite resources if the Programme of Action was to be implemented in a timely manner.

73. Despite the growing recognition of the challenges and development needs of landlocked developing countries, their growth and development continued to be stymied by high transport and transaction costs. Considerable investment would be required to address inadequate infrastructure and policy harmonization, which was a prerequisite for establishing efficient transit transport. Consequently, strengthening collaboration among landlocked developing countries, transit countries and development partners was crucial in order to mobilize the requisite financial resources and technical expertise.

74. Development partners must also honour commitments to increase aid for trade disbursements to improve the production capacity, infrastructure development and capacity-building of landlocked developing countries. National infrastructure development, particularly energy and roads, was a priority area for Uganda and had been allocated significant budget resources. On a subregional level, the East African Community continued to prioritize transit-corridor infrastructure development and enhancing transit transport cooperation, through such measures as single border posts, single window processing, electronic cargo tracking, harmonization of transit documents and charges and electronic clearance systems. The East African Community also envisaged the construction of new railway connections and the upgrading of existing ones and was collaborating with the African Development Bank to mobilize the necessary resources for such subregional projects.

75. Adequate preparations for the Almaty Programme of Action ten-year review conference in 2014 were crucial if the conference was to produce an action-oriented strategic framework that would better integrate landlocked developing countries in the global economy and move them closer to attaining the internationally agreed development goals.

76. **Mr. Tandari** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country fully supported the successful implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and called for poverty reduction and human development to be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda.

77. Tanzania had mainstreamed the Programme into its national five-year development plan, which prioritized resource allocation to agriculture and food security, education, health, water and sanitation, infrastructure development and energy. Gender equality and empowerment and trade were also mainstreamed into its national plan and strategy for growth and poverty reduction.

78. Developed countries were critical development partners in the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action. However, within the context of that process, least developed countries needed to be able to establish their own resource allocation priorities. If its national development plan and the Programme of Action were implemented successfully, Tanzania hoped to graduate to middle-income status

before 2025 and perhaps even 2020. That, however, would hinge on the ODA flow being 0.20 per cent and across-the-board stakeholder participation and inclusiveness, as well as increased public and private sector participation, FDI, domestic resource mobilization and private sector investment.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

79. **Mr. Toro** (Chile) said that his country regretted the Bolivian representative's attempts to divert attention to a matter that had already been resolved more than 100 years ago and was outside of the Committee's competence. The bilateral 1904 Treaty of Peace and Friendship established a free transit regime granting Bolivia ample access to the Pacific Ocean. It had been fully implemented and updated in line with new transport systems and international regulations.

80. Chile believed firmly in cooperation on transit matters and the facilities it granted Bolivia went well beyond those set out in the United Nations Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States. Bolivia enjoyed duty-free access to Iquique and others ports, through which millions of dollars in trade passed each year. Chile was always open to bilateral dialogue in the relevant forums in line with the Treaty of Peace and Friendship and other instruments.

81. **Mr. Llorentty** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his country believed the matter of regional and multilateral interest remained unresolved — and had been for over 100 years. The statement by the Chilean representative could not be further from the truth as the Treaty had been imposed through violence, force and military occupation. It was both unfair and unfulfilled. Paralysis of the La Paz-Arica railway system and the privatization of the port of Arica were flagrant violations of the 1904 Treaty. Bolivia had not been consulted on either of those decisions.

82. The Plurinational State of Bolivia reserved the right to resort to all mechanisms and institutions under international law to recover its inalienable rights to independent and sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

83. **Mr. Toro** (Chile) said that the matter was not pending and all territorial matters had been resolved by the 1904 Treaty, which had been signed 20 years after the end of the conflict. It had been approved and signed by both Governments and Bolivia had entered the negotiations of its own free will. History could not be revised.

84. Chile fulfilled its obligations enabling the free transit regime through the ports and railways. Indeed, it had been extended beyond the provisions of the United Nations Convention on Transit Trade of Land-locked States and Chile had invested tens of millions of dollars in the railway and ports, through which 60 per cent of Bolivian trade passed. Chile had even performed extensive remediation on the Arica-La Paz rail line to deal with pollution caused by mineral cargo. The United Nations was not competent to consider an issue that was strictly bilateral.

85. **Mr. Llorentty** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his delegation categorically rejected the Chilean representative's statement on the circumstances surrounding the signing of the Treaty. It had been forced after more than 20 years of military occupation of Bolivian territory, affecting borders, ports and trade and the threat of renewed hostilities.

86. Nor was the issue strictly bilateral. He recalled resolution 426 of the Organization of American States (OAS) — one of 11 OAS resolutions on the matter — which stated that it was of hemispheric interest that an equitable solution be found whereby Bolivia would obtain appropriate sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. The Plurinational State of Bolivia would continue to use all means at its disposal to achieve a peaceful resolution of the dispute, which was of multilateral interest.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.